



HEARD ACROSS MONTANA

An electronic newsletter in support of public safety services in Montana
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PSSB Weekly Highlights

- The Richland County Public Safety Communications System Manager position is posted on the Sidney Job Service site at this link: <http://wsd.dli.mt.gov/local/sidney/>. Starting salary is \$64,000 plus benefits. Closes on July 15.
- The Richland County application to DES to re-obligate DHS FY07 grant funds to the county for the Antelope Butte site infrastructure has been completed and signed by its commissioners. The next step is to submit the application to DES and to the executive management transition team for approval.

COML Class a Success

By E. Wing Spooner espooner@mt.gov

Fourteen participants attended—and passed—the newly revised 28-hour All Hazards Type III Communications Unit Leader (COML) training last week in Helena. Sponsored by the Office of Emergency Communications (OEC), this training covered how to coordinate on-scene emergency communications during a multi-jurisdictional response to an event.

According to Dale Osborne, Montana Highway Patrol Lead Communications Technician, “This was my second time through the course, but it was worth it because the curriculum has been updated and expanded. In fact, this was only the second time the new curriculum had been taught in the nation,” he said.

Participants came from all around Montana, including Billings, Hamilton, Helena and Missoula. In addition, two attendees hailed from Idaho and Oklahoma, the two main instructors represented the State of California, two adjunct instructors came from Oklahoma and a representative from Washington D.C.

OEC provides technical assistance to all 56 states and territories, which includes training, tools, and onsite assistance in an effort to expand and strengthen interoperable emergency communications across the nation. In the past, the

absence of on-scene communications coordination has often compromised critical operations. To close this capability gap, the OEC worked with other federal agencies and practitioners to develop performance and training standards as well as the comprehensive All-Hazards Type III COML curriculum.

Dan Hawkins, Dept. of Homeland Security Region VIII Coordinator, welcomed participants and the instructors on behalf of his office. He noted that the COML class is one of the most popular offerings, with more than 3,000 persons having completed it nationwide. He also commented that because of Montana’s experience with wild land fires and extensive participation in National Wildfire Coordinating Group Training, many responders are already familiar with the Incident Command System (ICS). The COML training expands on that training by extending participant knowledge from just that of wildfire response to the capability of handling all-hazard response activities.

Dave McGinnis, Missoula County’s Communications System Manager, said “What was really valuable about the class was establishing a COML community in Montana. This training not only brings a lot of capability to the state, but also gives us additional ideas on how to solve communications problems.”

He also added, “Everyone was really excited to get the training, and there was a lot of energy in the class.”

“The classroom was a simulated incident command center,” said Julia Noland, Telecommunications Specialist in the Public Safety



Class participants at the COML training in Helena last week.
(Photo by Dale Osborne, Montana Highway Patrol)

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Services Bureau. "I found the practical, real-world exercises to be very useful. By the time we finished submitting all the relevant forms to the 'logistics officer,' we became very comfortable with the planning effort required by a COML," she said.

Montana should be proud of its efforts to ensure that it has trained personnel capable of coordinating all-hazards emergency operations, and it is grateful to OEC for providing the training.

2011 Assistance to Firefighters Grant to Open Soon

By E. Wing Spooner espooner@mt.gov

The Assistance to Firefighters Grant (AFG) helps to ensure that firefighters and first responders have the essentials they need to be safe and effective on the job. Grants are available for a number of communications equipment items, including mobile and portable radios, mobile data systems, base stations, repeaters and computer-aided dispatch. Grant narrative sections of applications for such equipment must address local plans to enable or enhance interoperable communications within their jurisdiction as well as efforts to ensure consistency with the State Communications Interoperability Plan (SCIP).

Because of the delay in approving the FY2011 federal budget, the application period for this grant was pushed back. It is expected to open any day now. Interested applicants should prepare now to be eligible to apply.

New for this year is a requirement that grant recipients register in the Central Contractor Registration (CCR) System. In case you receive an award, you may want to register ahead of time. The first step is to obtain a DUNS number from Dun and Bradstreet at: <http://fedgov.dnb.com/webform>. Once a DUNS number is obtained, you may register here: <https://www.bpn.gov/ccr/default.aspx>.

The 2011 AFG *Get Ready Guide* is a new resource for successfully submitting a grant downloaded at: <http://www.fema.gov/firegrants>. Also coming soon is an AFG Application tutorial.

The program guidance should be available a

week prior to the start of the application period. To receive an announcement of the application period dates, you may want to sign up online to receive the AFG newsletter by visiting this site: <http://www.fema.gov/firegrants/program/newsletter.shtm>.



This photo features the generator at the new Government Hill site in Custer County.
(Photo by Brian Sewell, PE • www.bsee.us)

Upcoming Meetings

- **Tues., July 12**
Northern Tier Border Grant Meeting
Kalispell • 11:00 am
Flathead County Commissioner's Office
County Courthouse, 800 South Main Street
- **Thurs., July 21**
I-15/90 Consortium
Butte • 10:00 am - noon
Butte Chamber of Commerce, 1000 George St.
- **Tues., July 26**
State Agency Radio Users Task Force
Helena • 9:30-11:00 am
Mitchell Building, 125 S. Roberts, Rm. 223
- **Thurs., July 28**
Big Sky 11 Consortium
Billings • 10:00 am - noon
Yellowstone Co. EOC/Fire Station, 2305 8th Ave. N.